

Testimony on HB 5237  
October 6, 2005

My name is Jim Paparella and I am the executive director of Child & Family Services, Capital Area – a private, Lansing based human service and child welfare agency. Our agency employs fifty staff and we serve over 2,000 residents annually in the Ingham-Eaton-Clinton County area through our foster care, adoption, mental health, and substance abuse treatment programs. Most of the people we serve are categorized as vulnerable, impoverished, or disenfranchised.

I am here today in support of the consumer protections maintained in the bill, found in Section 505. Deceptive and fraudulent practices such as slamming and cramming cannot be tolerated. The current act has effectively reduced these incidences and our constituents appreciate that protection.

As you can imagine, our client population would most benefit from services such as Lifeline – a low-income, consumer protection program in the bill. The discounted telephone service offered through Lifeline positively impacts ~~benefits~~ many low income families who might not be able to afford even basic phone service.

Lastly, I am pleased to see that there is a safety net for primary basic local exchange service. The bill establishes 100 outgoing calls as the minimum. While it is difficult for me to determine the correct number of outgoing calls for this one primary access line, I urge you to set it sufficiently low. Affordability should be assured for those who have the greatest need.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.



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